

Nomination for the State Agency Recognition Awards 2002

Title: Customer Service

Other Title not Listed:

Recipient: Office of Risk and Insurance Management

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Nominee:

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Executive Summary: Since 1998, the Office of Risk and Insurance Management (ORIM) has made significant increases in the area of small business participation. ORIM's overall participation moved from 9% in 1998 to 80% in 2000. In 2001, small business participation for service contracts rose to 93%. The overall participation rose to 81%.

This year we are proud to recognize ORIM for yet another increase in their small business participation. The overall small business participation for the office increased from 81% in 2001 to 92% by the end of fiscal year 2002.

When asked about the "creative and innovative" ideas used to effect these increases, Kathy Hanford, ORIM's Small Business and Disabled Veterans Advocate, stated, "Well, I'm not sure we were either of those (creative or innovative). Mainly it was just going the extra mile in assisting our contractors by taking the fear and the "seeming" complexity out of the process of getting certified. We dealt with many small businesses that weren't certified. With great support from ORIM's management, I contacted each contractor individually and basically walked them through the process....and it worked!"

In addition, Kathy gave credit to the passage of SB 1049 which allows offices to do an informal bid process with contracts under \$100,000 as long as two or more bids are from small businesses. "A lot of our service contracts are under the \$100,000 cut off. It's much easier for us and for the small business contractors to obtain and submit bids than it was before. This has greatly assisted us."

Written Nomination: We began our project of increasing small business participation in 1999. The Office Chief at that time, Ralph Maurer, gave great support to this project, letting us know that we should do all in our power to bring the small business participation up to higher percentages. The bulk of the work fell on our Contract Administrator and Small Business Advocate, Kathy Hanford. Kathy called each contractor personally and walked them through the process. She also followed up to ensure that certifications had been gained. Results were impressive. The participation went from 9% in 1998 to 80% in 2000. With this understanding in place in the minds of the contractors, word spread and other small businesses were included in solicitations that came up in future years. These small businesses felt at ease to contact our office for instructions on how to get certified. In addition, we began monitoring our contracts to ensure that certifications were kept current. Phone calls were made to remind

contractors when the time was drawing near for recertification. By the year 2002 the overall small business participation had risen to 92%. On the "goods" side, the ORIM made focused efforts to purchase our goods from certified small business vendors. The Small Business Advocate, Kathy Hanford, received many advertisements through the Internet which she shared with the Administration Unit's purchasing agent, June Tanaka. Through these efforts the overall small business participation increased from 80% in 2000 to 92% in 2002. We learned that having the support of management went a long long way in getting us moving on this project.

We learned that person-to-person contact was very helpful. We learned that taking the fear out of the process was immensely helpful in not only getting businesses started into the process, but also in expediting the process.

We learned that having the informal bid process in place for contracts under \$100,000 was very helpful because it made it easier on us in preparing the document and easier on the bidders for submitting their bids. By its very nature, this informal process included the small business vendors.